

**Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program
Application Form FY 2012**

Please do not reformat this form – use the fillable pdf form

Please print double-sided

Please fasten application package with a binder clip, no three-ring or plastic binders!

1. **Municipality:** Town of Amherst
Population (2010 U.S. Census): 37,819
2. **Project Name:** Balancing Conservation and Recreation: Sustaining Puffer's Pond as a Community Destination

Type of Project:

☐ Acquisition – acreage _____ ☐ New development ☒ Renovation of existing park

Project address: 205 Triangle Street, Amherst, MA 01002

3. **Contact Person:** David Ziomek, Director of Conservation and Development

Agency: Town of Amherst

Address: Town Hall, 4 Boltwood Avenue

Amherst, MA

Zip 01002

Telephone (413) 259 - 3122 Fax (413) 259 - 2402

Email: ziomekd@amherstma.gov

Please note: the contact person is the official representative for this project as authorized under item #14(b) of this application, usually not the chief municipal officer.

4. **Briefly describe the project on TWO attached pages.** Use the Outdoor Recreation Project Rating System as an outline for the description, as well as the items bulleted below, to ensure the maximum score possible for your project.

a.) Acquisition Projects:

- site location – in an Environmental Justice neighborhood and/or site's distance to the nearest park
- rare species (include letter from NHESP) (to determine if NHESP must approve site plans)
- historic or archaeological resource (include letter from MHC) (to determine if MHC must approve site plans)

b.) Development or Renovation Projects

- describe facilities being developed
- describe community needs, including park equity/need in this neighborhood, if park is in an Environmental Justice neighborhood
- new acres dedicated as parkland
- brownfield projects must submit 21E evaluation and, at the minimum the Executive Summary of a Phase II Comprehensive Site Assessment under state cleanup regulations (Massachusetts Contingency Plan), or a Response Action Outcome statement for each Response Tracking Number

c.) All Projects:

- accessibility for the disabled
- water based recreation (include linear footage of bordering water resource)
- cooperation of any other governmental agency (state, federal, county) or private nonprofit, fiscal or other
- located in a high density area, Environmental Justice neighborhood, town/city center, or area of the community that lacks park resources
- access to a public transportation route and other urban center services
- description of enhanced public outreach in Environmental Justice neighborhood
- environmental education/interpretive services planned for site
- regional or statewide facility (communities applying in either category should submit a Usage Report)
 - accessible via public transportation (within a 1/2-mile walk)

- parking for 100 (or more) vehicles
- provides adequate comfort stations and potable water outlets
- serves all age groups

5. Proposed Funding:

The PARC program is a **reimbursement** program. Grant recipients are reimbursed after invoices have been paid. **The total project cost must be raised or appropriated by the municipality shortly after project approval if it has not already been appropriated.** Costs incurred prior to grant approval and contract execution are ineligible, including design costs. Force account labor, volunteer hours, and donations are also ineligible. Refer to PARC regulations (Section 5.07) for eligible cost details. Sample budget can be found in Attachment E.

Total Eligible Project Cost: \$370,000

PARC Request: \$259,000

(52-70% of total project cost based on Equalized Valuation Per Capita, can be found on DCS web page, maximum of \$500,000)

PARC Municipal Share: \$111,000

(Community Development Block Grant, Community Preservation Act, etc., please specify in narrative)

Other: _____

(i.e. private donation to community, fund raising, etc. that will be a part of the municipal share)

Attach a one page description of the proposed project budget including:

- The source of all local funding including donations and Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds.
- Description of the details of any donation, if applicable (be sure these funds are gifted to the community and earmarked for the project).
- Description of any other sources of funding including federal, state, municipal, or nonprofit organizations. List these partners and describe their contribution. Not all sources of state and federal funds are compatible with every DCS grant program.
- Budget should be broken into two distinct fiscal years for renovation and development projects – FY 12 costs associated with design, FY 13 costs associated with construction.

6. Project Type: Please indicate type of project, refer to the program's regulations for definitions (Sec 5:03) and to the list of required attachments found at the end of this application form to substantiate any "yes" answers. Indicate here whether:

☒ Your municipality is an urban population center (city of any size or town with 35,000 or more residents)

☐ Your project qualifies as a regional or statewide project (town with 35,000 or less residents whose proposed project has public transportation access and/or over 100 car parking) (submit a Usage Report)

☐ Your project qualifies as a "small town" project (town with 35,000 or less residents)

7. Green Communities

Has your community been designated Green Communities by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs?

☐ Yes ☒ No **PLEASE SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE**

For more information on the Green Communities program, visit

<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoeasubtopic&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Energy%2C+Utilities+%26+Clean+Technologies&L2=Green+Communities&sid=Eoea>.

8. Describe outstanding leases, restrictions or other rights or interests held by others in the project site and enclosed copy of the same (for file records only). N/A

9. Is the property permanently dedicated for park, playground, or recreation purposes (MGL Chapter 45, Section 3 or 14)? If not, please submit draft dedication language for DCS review as all PARC projects must be dedicated for park, playground, or recreation purposes.

☐ Yes

☒ No **PLEASE SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE**

Total acres of dedicated park land 15.38+5.72+9.06+11+11.18=52.34 Total Acres on five parcels _____

10. Are fees currently charged or proposed for this facility? If yes, please attach a copy of the fee system. Charging fees is allowed subject to DCS approval. If applicant is awarded a grant, the site cannot be restricted to municipal residents only. If fees are charged based on residency, fees for nonresidents are subject to Section 5.08(3) of the PARC regulations (for file records only).

☐ Yes (copy attached)

☒ No

11. Municipal Open Space and Recreation Plan

Describe how your project meets the recommendations in your current Open Space and Recreation Plan. To receive points in this category, you must cite specific goals, objectives, and/or actions from the Action Plan and the associated page number references. If we already have a copy of your plan, there is no need to submit another copy.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED NARRATIVE

12. Check the following if applicable to project (for file records only):

- ☐ Yes ☒ No Prime agricultural lands (see Ex. Order #193)
☒ Yes ☐ No Cultural, historic, archeological site: Contact MA Historical Commission (617) 727-8470
☒ Yes ☐ No Endangered species habitat: Contact MA Natural Heritage Program (508) 389-6300
☐ Yes ☒ No Environmental intrusion, i.e. overhead power lines (must be buried), safety hazards
☐ Yes ☒ No Brownfield – 21E evaluation
☒ Yes ☐ No Environmental Justice community/neighborhood (see EJ data viewer at <http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/EJ/viewer.htm>)
☐ Yes ☒ No Acquisition involving relocation of residents, tenants, or businesses
☐ Yes ☒ No Negotiated sale

Do you have a Purchase and Sales Agreement or Agreed Price?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, Amount:

\$ _____

Is Clear Title available?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, is an eminent domain taking anticipated?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, proposed pro tanto award amount:

\$ _____

Note that if clear title is not available, the community may decide to acquire the property by a friendly taking (eminent domain) process to clear the title. It is best to know if there is a potential title problem as soon as possible since this can complicate the acquisition process.

Appraisal Report #1

Valuation: \$ _____

Appraiser: _____

Valuation Date: _____

Review Appraisal Report #2 – if land valued at over \$750,000

Valuation: \$ _____

Appraiser: _____

Valuation Date: _____

13. Check if the following permits are required (for file records only):

- ☐ Yes ☒ No U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (404 or Rivers and Waterways)
☒ Yes ☐ No MA DEP Division of Wetlands & Waterways (617) 292-5518
☐ Yes ☒ No U.S. Coast Guard
☐ Yes ☒ No U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (Zoos)
☒ Yes ☐ No C. 131 s. 40 Wetlands (municipal conservation commission)
☒ Yes ☐ No MEPA Review (301 CMR 11.00: MEPA Regulations) (617) 626-1020

This PARC Grant application is for a two-year, design and construction project that is not at the phase to submit the permits referenced above. It is the intention of the Town of Amherst to work with the selected consultant to file for the required permits when the design and project are ready.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

If any of the above permits are required, the permit or application for the permit must be submitted. Should the project be selected for funding, the permit will be required as part of the final application.

14. Attach certification of:

- a. Applicant community's legal authority to apply for the grant and to finance and construct the proposed facilities (see Sample Municipal Vote), and the **Chief Executive Officer's legal authorization to execute contracts**. This is a resolution, motion, or similar action that has been duly adopted or passed as an official act of the community's governing body which authorizes the filing of the applications, including all understandings and assurances contained therein; and
- b. Authorization from chief municipal officer identifying individual named on the first page of this application who acts as official of municipality in connection with the application and who will provide such additional information as may be required (See Urban Self-Help Regulations 5.04:(6)).

7/13/11
Date

Janet P. Pooler
Signature of Chief Municipal Officer

JANFORD POOLER, ACTING TOWN MANAGER
Name and Title (Typed)

Duration of Term

Mailing Address: 4 BOLTWOOD AVE

AMHERST, MA 01002

Telephone: (413) 259-3002

Chapter 216 of the Acts of 2001

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE AMHERST TOWN GOVERNMENT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Chapter 10 of the acts of 1936 is hereby repealed.

SECTION 2. Chapter 11 of the acts of 1951 is hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. Chapter 65 of the acts of 1951 is hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. Sections 6, 7, 8 and 9 of chapter 512 of the acts of 1972 are hereby repealed.

SECTION 5. Chapter 1088 of the acts of 1973 is hereby repealed.

SECTION 6. Chapter 404 of the acts of 1998 is hereby repealed.

SECTION 7.

The following shall constitute the charter of the town of Amherst:

AMHERST TOWN GOVERNMENT ACT

4. The Town Manager

4.6 Administrative powers and duties

The town manager shall be the chief administrative and fiscal officer of all town agencies, other than the schools and the library. In addition to specific powers and duties provided in this act the town manager shall have the general powers and duties enumerated below.

4.61 Administration and reorganization of departments and offices

4.611 Supervision

The town manager shall supervise and direct the efficient and responsible administration of all officers and employees appointed by the town manager and their respective offices and departments, and of all functions for which the town manager is given responsibility by the select board, or under the laws of the commonwealth, this act, and by-laws passed by town meeting.

4.612 Examination of town records

The town manager may without notice examine the records of any office or department under the manager's control and have access to all town books, papers, and electronic records for information necessary for the proper performance of the manager's duties.

4.613 Reorganization

The town manager may, in accordance with the provisions of this act and except as otherwise expressly prohibited by the General Laws reorganize, consolidate or abolish such departments or offices as are under the manager's authority, in whole or in part; establish such new departments or offices as the manager deems necessary; and transfer the duties, powers and appropriation when incidental to the reorganization of 1 department or office to another.

4.62 Information and advice to the select board

4.621 Attendance at select board meetings

The town manager shall attend regular meetings of the select board except meetings at which the board considers the manager's salary, formulation of the manager's employment contract, and the manager's removal.

4.622 Ensure records available to select board

The town manager shall ensure that all town offices keep full and complete records which shall be available to the select board, and upon request to others as required by law.

4.623 Advice about needs of the town

The town manager shall keep the select board fully advised as to the needs of the town and shall recommend to the select board for adoption such measures requiring action by them or by the town as deemed necessary or expedient.

4.63 Supervision of town properties

The town manager shall have jurisdiction over the rental, use, maintenance, and repair of all town property except school property and property under the control of the town library trustees. The town manager shall be responsible for the preparation of plans and the supervision of work on existing buildings or on the construction of new buildings other than school buildings and buildings under the control of the library trustees. The town manager shall maintain and repair school buildings if and to the extent that the school committee requests, and the town manager shall maintain and repair buildings under the control of the library trustees if and to the extent that they so request.

4.64 Supplies, contracts and approval of warrants

4.641 Purchase of supplies

The town manager shall purchase all supplies, materials and equipment and shall award all contracts for all departments of the town except the schools and the town

library unless, and to the extent that, the school committee or the trustees of the town library may request by signed requisition.

4.642 Approval of warrants

The town manager shall receive all warrants for the payment of town funds in accordance with section 56 of chapter 41 of the General Laws. The approval of any such warrant by the town manager shall be sufficient authority to authorize payment by the town treasurer, but the select board shall approve all warrants in the event of a vacancy in the office of town manager.

4.65 Prosecution of litigation

The town manager shall have authority to prosecute, defend and compromise all litigation to which the town is a party and to employ special counsel whenever in the judgment of the select board it may be necessary.

4.66 Other administrative duties

4.661 Administer provisions of general and special laws

The town manager shall administer either directly, or through a person or persons appointed in accordance with this act, all provisions of general and special laws applicable to the town, all by-laws voted by town meeting and all regulations established by the select board.

4.662 Other duties

The town manager shall perform such other duties, consistent with the office, as may be required by state law, the by-laws of the town, or by vote of the select board or of the town meeting.

4.7 Annual review of the town manager

The select board shall conduct an annual review for the purpose of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the manager's performance. The review shall be based on a written list of performance criteria developed by the select board. Copies of the criteria with an invitation to submit written comments shall be available to the public in the select board office. After due consideration the select board shall prepare a written report of its evaluation. The report shall be placed in the manager's personnel file and a written summary may be released to the public.

4.8 Review at the end of the contract period

The select board shall conduct an employment review at the end of the contract period to determine if the manager's employment contract should be renewed. In the event of

the non-renewal of the manager's employment contract the provisions of Section 4.9 shall apply.

4.9 Removal of the town manager

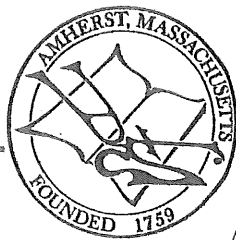
The select board, by a vote of 3 or more members of the board, may remove the town manager by the following procedures: At least 30 days before such proposed removal shall become effective, the select board shall file a preliminary written resolution with the town clerk setting forth in detail the specific reasons for the manager's proposed removal, a copy of which resolution shall be delivered to the town manager.

The manager may reply in writing to the resolution and may request a public hearing. If the manager so requests, the select board shall hold a public hearing not earlier than 20 days no later than 30 days after the filing of such request.

After the public hearing, if any, otherwise at the expiration of 30 days following the filing of the preliminary resolution, and after full consideration, the select board by a vote of 3 or more members of the board may adopt a final resolution of removal.

In the preliminary resolution, the select board may suspend the manager from duty, but shall in any case cause to be paid to the manager forthwith any unpaid balance of salary due in terms of the contract or salary for the next 3 calendar months following the filing of the preliminary resolution, whichever is greater.

Town of



AMHERST

Massachusetts

TOWN HALL
4 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002-2351

July 14, 2011

Melissa Cryan
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The Town of Amherst's Chief Executive, as the duly authorized official and sole contract signatory authority, designates the Department of Conservation and Development, the Accounting Department and the Leisure Services and Supplemental Education (LSSE) Department to apply for and receive funding on behalf of the Town Manager. The following individuals are authorized to receive funds and implement the FY2012 PARC Grant Program:

David Ziomek, Director of Conservation and Development

Brad Bordewieck, Land Manager

Sonia Aldrich, Comptroller

Holly Bowser, Assistant to Comptroller

Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner

Signature of Chief Executive

ACTING Town Manager,

Date 7/13/11

INTRODUCTION

As a much loved and widely used natural amenity, Puffer's Pond has been, and continues to be, an integral area that helps define North Amherst. The pond is the centerpiece of a greenbelt conservation & recreation area that stretches across town and includes formal recreation areas and walking trails along the Mill River and Cushman Brook. The Robert Frost Trail, an interstate hiking trail, runs along the eastern shore of Puffer's Pond before heading north into Leverett (See attached maps). As the largest open water body in Town (approximately 11 acres), Puffer's Pond is a prominent recreation area for fishing, birding, nature walking, canoeing, picnicking and swimming. Two of the Town's six village centers are within one-mile of the pond, as is some of the densest residential housing in Amherst, such that thousands of residents can walk to Puffer's Pond. Even before Amherst owned the area, it was a recreation destination, attracting hundreds of visitors per day during the summer months.

Amherst citizens, students, area residents and tourists enjoy Puffer's Pond so much that they are 'loving it to death' (See Amherst Bulletin Article). Because there is no fee charged to use the pond and its surroundings, there is a tremendous amount of overuse on the pond's beaches, perimeter trail, and parking. The extensive trail network around the pond brings people into environmentally sensitive areas that are currently in need of restoration, creating management challenges as they contribute significantly to the area's many environmental and ecological problems. The public may incorrectly believe that since Puffer's Pond is a conservation area, it is 'natural' and in satisfactory condition requiring little management or town regulations. This could not be further from the truth.

The properties surrounding Puffer's Pond were acquired by the Town in the mid-late 20th century with funding from the Self-help program and the Federal BOR (Land & Water Conservation Fund); so that the purchases were intended to provide both conservation value and active & passive recreation uses. In its application for the combined funding, the Conservation Commission specified that the area would "provide water-based recreation and all forms of individualistic and extensive activities in connection with the rest of the Mill River area".

PUBLIC VISIONING

The Amherst Conservation Commission established the 11-member Puffer's Pond 2020 Committee in the spring of 2009. The Committee included members from the Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Leisure Services and Supplemental Education (LSSE) Commission, as well as citizen volunteers. The committee considered various options for the use, restoration, beautification, and preservation of Puffer's Pond, and made their formal recommendations to the Conservation Commission (the committee's work is available online at <http://ma-amherst3.civicplus.com/index.aspx?NID=1178>). The Conservation Commission has endorsed the Committee's recommendations and plans, and are working toward implementation of the essential improvements to sustain the pond.

The Committee met monthly from July 2009 through May 2010, with various subcommittees meeting more often. The Committee also held two public workshops (See meeting notice attached) at the start of the process to identify key issues of concern to the public, and to get a sense of possible solutions that might have public support. These meetings were held in local venues to accommodate the EJ populations in the area, and to make the meetings more accessible to the public. In general, the main public sentiment was that the Town should use solutions that minimize changes to the uses and beauty of the Pond and trails; effective designs and improvements that are not heavy handed or transform the area into an urban park. The committee was also assisted by a UMass Landscape Architecture studio that provided creative potential designs for the paths and built structures of the greenway, while Amherst College students provided very helpful bathymetry and sediment composition data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee's plan included a thorough list of recommendations; however, the highest priorities included improvements to the perimeter trail around the pond, the north and south beaches, and parking/circulation on State Street, the public way adjacent to Puffer's Pond. The committee determined that the trails and beaches are subject to an unacceptable level of erosion and compaction with vegetative loss that is impairing wildlife values and recreational functionality; the perimeter trail around the Pond is broken down and sloughing off into the water. The perimeter trail needs stabilization and re-vegetation in many areas where it traverses along the water's edge, and fencing to redirect users away from sensitive resource areas. The retaining structures on the north and south beach to stabilize the sand are falling apart, while the accessible pathway and lookout area (including handrails leading into the water) on the South Beach should be updated and expanded. South beach is the primary swimming area, which needs to be improved to handle crowds that number in the hundreds per day during the summer months. Visitation on peak spring and summer days is increasing and the Pond is becoming a regional draw. This is leading to unsafe conditions on State Street (the access road to the Pond) due to insufficient parking that often causes conflicts between vehicles and the numerous pedestrians and cyclists who use the road. Most importantly, the Committee recommended that the Town utilize professional consultants to redesign these areas before rehabilitation to better meet current needs and to minimize impacts to the ecologically sensitive areas.

The Committee's recommendations tried to balance public input, growing demand and use of the pond, and the fact that much of this area is designated habitat. The entire Cushman Brook-Puffer's Pond riparian corridor is designated as Primary and Supporting Habitat for Rare and Endangered Species and Wildlife, and the pond has been mapped as Living Waters Prime Habitat. Portions of the Cushman Brook northeast of the pond are also identified as Biomap Supporting Natural Landscapes, meaning that large, naturally vegetated blocks relatively free from the impacts of roads and developments buffer and connect Biomap Core Habitat (NHESP). These designations indicate that the health of the entire corridor is critical to the health and stability of many ecologically sensitive flora and fauna. Puffer's Pond and surrounding trail network also contain sites of archeological importance—confirmed Native American trailway and temporary lodging sites, as well as historic mill sites. The Committee's recommendations included the use of professional consultants to help preserve these very important landscapes that surround the pond.

GREEN COMMUNITY STATUS

Currently, the Town of Amherst is not a Green Community recognized by the EOEEA. However, the Town's leadership is committed to becoming a Green Community and is actively taking steps to complete an application for submittal during the fall 2011 grant round. The community recognizes the importance of working toward the State's sustainable development principles, and even without formal recognition, the Town functions as though it meets the five criteria used by EOEEA when awarding Green Community status:

1. Amherst provides as-of-right siting for the research and development of renewable energy,
2. Amherst provides expedited permitting for the research and development, and the generation of, renewable energy,
3. All municipally owned buildings and structures have completed an energy audit, which is accompanied by a Climate Action plan developed by the Town's Energy Task Force,
4. Town Meeting has voted to adopt a policy where only the most fuel efficient vehicles are purchased, and
5. The 2011 Annual Spring Town Meeting adopted the stretch energy code.

DEDICATED PARK LAND

Puffer's Pond and much of the greenway along its tributaries and Mill River is permanently preserved open space under the care and control of the Conservation Commission. Since the properties were purchased with State and Federal funding, they are open to the public and must allow passive and informal active recreation. The Town of Amherst is committed to sustain Puffer's Pond as a recreation destination and as an area with significant conservation value, realizing that balancing conservation and recreation can be a challenging task and is often viewed as divergent land use strategies.

OSRP/SCORP

Improvements to Puffer's Pond help achieve five of the eight overarching goals of the OSRP:

Goal 3. Provide and develop multi-use and multi-generational recreational opportunities that bring townspeople together.

Objectives:

- Develop recreational areas that integrate active and passive recreational opportunities available to all ages and abilities.
 - Action: Expand Puffer's Pond as a conservation and recreation area with volunteer stewardship programs, develop formal swimming areas, increase accessible trail system, and interpretive sign system explaining benefits of respecting the environment (Pg. 83).
- Develop universal access programs to provide outdoor activities for those with disabilities and mobility impairment.
 - Action: Develop Puffer's Pond area with a fully accessible trail loop and system, and beach area (Pg. 83).

Goal 4. Expand and connect existing preserved land and trail system to make a greenway network throughout town.

Objectives:

- Prepare and implement a universal access trail plan for the Town
 - Action: Improve opportunities for people with disabilities to access trails and conservation areas (Pg. 88).
 - Action: Design and install a system of signs at trailheads, parking areas and at all recreational facilities that clearly show skill level, accessibility areas, and designated uses for each location (Pg. 88).
- Improve yearly trail maintenance and strengthen regulations governing trail use.
 - Action: Address erosion and compaction issues throughout the trail system (Pg 88).

Goal 5. Develop a variety of land protection approaches that balance development regulations, protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat, and the need for recreational space.

Objectives:

- Institutionalize a process for resolving competing public land use interests.
 - Action: Require community charrettes as part of the permitting process, to encourage public input into design (Pg. 90).
- Mitigate competing uses and conflicting activities on conservation and recreation land.
 - Action: Increase number of signs at trailheads, conservation areas, and recreational facilities that clearly list all the rules, regulations and penalties (Pg. 91).
 - Action: Reach out to all user groups (e.g. dog walkers, hikers, cyclists, ATV riders) to cooperatively balance and mitigate impacts on conservation and recreation land (Pg. 91).

Goal 6. Develop partnerships with organizations to protect, manage and promote the town's natural attractions that are the basis for tourism and the cultural economy.

Objective:

- Increase program activity directed toward organized outdoor recreation activities that make use of Amherst's existing preserved lands and trails.

Goal 8. Improve stewardship of conservation lands and trails.

Objective:

- Increase efforts to raise funds, private or from any source, for the maintenance improvement of trails and conservation areas.
 - Action: Research grant programs that allow for creative partnerships as fulfilling match requirements (Pg. 95).

The OSRP indicates the challenges faced by the Town to manage Puffer's Pond (as well as the Amethyst Brook Conservation Area) due to extreme overuse—"overuse of favored areas by local residents and regional users, increasing conflicts between user groups, and inappropriate activity by citizens... are resulting in cumulative damage to the critical environmental resources Amherst's residents have come to enjoy and take for granted (Pg. 47)." During the public outreach sessions conducted as part of the recent update to the OSRP, a common concern of local residents was the overuse of the pond and the need for a management plan and physical improvements to the area (Pg 97). The OSRP outlines crucial steps to improve this trend, which includes increased management and regulation, public outreach and education, and a public process that culminates in physical improvements to these resources and amenities. The work of Puffer's Pond 2020 and the support of the Conservation Commission and local residents has prepared the Town to begin implementing the committee's recommendations.

By looking at the Action Plan Map, Circle 1 (See attached OSRP Action Plan Map), it can be seen that improvements to Puffer's Pond is both a recreation and conservation priority; The Town is aware that the growing use and demand for Puffer's Pond will exacerbate existing conditions if action steps are not implemented. Puffer's Pond is included in Circle 1 on the Action Plan Map because it is a regional destination where it is possible to appropriately adapt preserved land to (active) recreation (Pg. 82). Puffer's Pond is also located within walking distance of, and connected by walking trails to, the Mill River Recreation Area, Cherry Hill Golf Course, and two village centers (Pg. 82)—the area is a priority for conservation management and improvements to recreational facilities and amenities and the trail network.

State Standards (SCORP)—2006

In the Connecticut River Valley Region, as described in Chapter 5 of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), swimming (52%), golfing (26%) and playground use (25%) are the most popular active organized recreational activities for people living in this region. The highest priorities for funding preferences reported in SCORP were:

- Maintaining existing facilities (98%);
- Restoring and improving outdoor recreational areas (92%);
- Improving access for people with disabilities (89%);
- Providing guides and interpretive information (84%); and
- Purchasing new outdoor recreational areas (79%).

SCORP shows that "the inferred need for new recreational areas in the Connecticut River Valley Region" includes establishing new parks and golf courses, new trails and greenways, and new bikeways. The highest priorities for funding identified in the SCORP are aligned with the conservation and recreation priorities for Amherst as well. The Town owns a significant amount of preserved open space and conservation land, but the existing facilities need serious updating and renovations, conservation areas suffer from extreme overuse, and many areas need to improve access for those with disabilities.

FY2012 PARC Grant Proposal
Sustaining Puffer's Pond
Amherst, Massachusetts

PROJECT BUDGET

Design	\$ 35,000.00
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General Costs	
Permitting	\$ 15,000.00
Construction Oversight	\$ 20,000.00
Interpretive signs	\$ 5,000.00
Sub-Total	\$ 40,000.00
State Street Improvements	
50 car gravel parking lot	\$ 60,000.00
Walking trail from parking to south beach	\$ 15,000.00
Sub-Total	\$ 75,000.00
South Beach Improvements	
Remove and replace retaining structures	\$ 50,000.00
erosion control--vegetation	\$ 25,000.00
Site plantings-trees, bushes	\$ 15,000.00
ADA Improvements	\$ 20,000.00
Sub-Total	\$ 110,000.00
Perimeter Trail	
Erosion control-vegetation	\$ 15,000.00
Remove and replace retaining structures	\$ 20,000.00
Fencing	\$ 10,000.00
Sub-Total	\$ 45,000.00
North Beach	
Remove and replace retaining structures	\$ 20,000.00
Excavate and widen beach area	\$ 30,000.00
Erosion control along steep slopes	\$ 15,000.00
Sub-Total	\$ 65,000.00
Total Construction (excludes Design)	\$ 335,000.00

TOTAL PROJECT COST \$ 370,000.00

FY2012 PARC REQUEST (Design) \$ 24,500.00
FY2013 PARC REQUEST (Construction) \$ 234,500.00

TOWN SHARE
FY2012 (Design) \$ 10,500.00
FY2013 (Construction) \$ 100,500.00

*Estimates were generated by Town staff and consultation with professional consultants.

**The local share will be funded in its entirety from the Town's General Funds as appropriated at Town Meeting.

AMHERST BULLETIN

O, Puffer's, are we loving you to an early grave?

By **Mary Carey**
Staff Writer

Published on July 27, 2007

Matt Taggart was lying on a raft in the middle of Puffer's Pond one day, when a beaver causing a ruckus flapping its tail about 75 feet away suddenly appeared by Taggart's side and whacked him in the arm.

The Sunderland man paddled out of the pond as fast as he could. He still comes to Puffer's to relax but hasn't taken a dip since.

"I should get back in, because it's a great thing to do," Taggart, 30, reflected on a trip to the pond this week with his brother, Phil Snow.

Snow, 22, who was fishing, first came to Puffer's with his University of Massachusetts fish and animal identification class. The students put in a large net and reeled in largemouth and smallmouth bass, brown and rainbow trout and perch to name a few of the fish, he said.

Everybody who has been there has a story about Puffer's Pond. One of the only largely unregulated public ponds in the state, it's a crown jewel of Amherst. People like it so much, in fact, they're "loving it to death," said the town's conservation director, David Ziomek.

The heavily-used trails around the pond are eroding and budget constraints threaten to reduce the number of hours staff can devote to maintaining and supervising the area. Ziomek, who grew up in Amherst and was a lifeguard at the nearby Mill River Recreation Area, estimates that 10 times as many people come to the pond and the green corridor stretching between it and Mill River as did 20 or so years ago.

The conservation challenge was brought to the fore this year when Town Meeting failed to approve spending \$12,000 for a caretaker at the pond this summer.

To Ziomek's and others' relief, private groups, including the Friends of Puffer's Pond and the Kestrel Trust raised money to pay a caretaker to work there for part of June, July and August from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. "They're doing everything from trying to keep people safe by not jumping off the cliffs and the dam, to cleaning trash and working on beaver management issues," the conservation director said.

Plans are in the works to step up fundraising, but it's something of a short-term solution. For the longer term, the Conservation Commission will develop a management master plan for the pond and environs. Besides cataloguing its resources, the plan would consider issues such as the advisability of continuing to allow kayaks on the pond and the question of whether there should be a lifeguard there. Water quality questions will be considered, including whether the town should test for giardia, a parasite carried by beavers.

The crux of the challenge facing Puffer's is that it's a conservation area but also a recreation destination, said David Sharken, who has lived in one of the two houses on the pond since 1990.

Everyone may have a story about the pond, but most of them defer to Stephen P. Puffer Jr., after whose family it is named, when it comes to first-hand knowledge of its history. Puffer, 90, begins his story, the same way other town historians do, with the dam that was created to power the five saw, woolen and grain mills that once helped fuel Amherst's economy. The area, including the pond, was

called Factory Hollow at the time.

Town Planner Jonathan Tucker, an Amherst native, calls the pond a vestige of the community's industrial heritage. "It's a surviving remnant and a reminder that people didn't always stand in front of a group of people and talk for a living," Tucker said, referring to Amherst's reputation as an academic community now.

Around 1910, Puffer's grandfather, Edward Stephen Puffer, and a partner decided to get into the ice business, cutting big blocks of it from the pond then storing and delivering the ice to customers in the summer. "My grandfather, my father did it and then it came down to me," Puffer said. "I did the same thing up until the year 1943. In 1943, Uncle Sam decided he needed me in the service, so I went there and that ended the ice business."

By the time he returned to North Amherst a few years later, no one needed ice any more. It was the dawn of the refrigerator.

In 1977, Puffer, with help from Jim Smith, the former town engineer, rebuilt the aging dam and Puffer later donated the pond to the town. Students at what is now the University of Massachusetts had already dubbed it Puffer's Pond, when they started going there in 1931, after the ice house burned down and the ice cutting was put on hold for a spell.

Puffer doesn't swim in the pond now, but there was a time when he swam in it year-round for better or worse. "In the winter time, I'd fall through the ice," he said.

Smith, the former town engineer, recalls when he and Puffer dredged the bottom of the pond after closing the dam for repairs. There wasn't much to speak of on the bottom, Smith said. But he, for one, wouldn't swim there. People leave trash, including broken glass there, but any body of water poses a danger, especially with no lifeguard, Smith said.

Peter Westover, Amherst's former longtime conservation director, takes a different view. "I suspect that they'll find a way to solve these problems," Westover said. "It's a wonderful thing for people, but it's got hazards. It's managed like a country pond. Occasionally you get somebody saying, 'You've got to close the place down.'"

But you can't close it down, Westover said. "You've got to find a way to make it safe as possible without overregulating it and cracking down on everything. Maybe the day will come when you have to have lifeguards and severe regulation, but I kind of hope not."

Puffer's Pond 2020 Committee

Committee Charge

The Conservation Commission creates *Puffer's Pond 2020—A Plan For The Future* to consider options for the use, restoration, beautification, and preservation of Puffer's Pond and surrounding conservation lands, including the Mill River/Cushman Brook Greenway. The committee shall study the various aspects of the Pond and Greenway between Rt. 63 and Leverett Road with a particular focus on conservation and recreation, ecology, land use, water quality, and environmental health, and shall make recommendations to the Conservation Commission in the form of a final report. The committee may conduct site visits, hold public meetings, and may conduct one public/user comment survey to assess and determine current conditions of the Pond and surrounding area to help determine appropriate resolutions and future actions. The Committee shall prioritize the strategies recommended. The Committee shall prepare a report to the Conservation Commission on or before April 30, 2010. The Committee shall be composed of up to eleven (11) voting members appointed by the Conservation Commission for a term to expire July 1, 2010. One Member shall be from the Select Board, one Member from the Planning Board and one Member from the LSSE Commission. Prospective at-large Members shall be residents of Amherst and must complete a Citizen Activity Form to be considered for the committee. The committee shall be a public committee subject to the Open Meeting Law. Public participation is encouraged.

Committee Members

- HAMIN, Elisabeth— *Chair*
- ANGUS, Briony – *Conservation Commission Rep.*
- GAGE, Meg
- HAYDEN, Aaron – *Select Board Rep.*
- JONES, Emlen
- MUSKA, Paris
- PATULAK, James – *LSSE Rep.*
- PISTRANG, James
- SHOPPER, Evan
- WEBBER, David – *Planning Board Rep.*

Staff Liaisons

David Ziomek, Director of Conservation & Development

Nathaniel Malloy, Associate Planner

David McKinnon, Assistant Land Manager

Contact Information:

(413) 259-3045 conservation@amherstma.gov



Please complete an online survey if you would like to provide the committee with information: <http://www.amherstma.gov/forms.aspx?fid=141>

'Fun Facts' about Puffer's Pond

Size of Pond: 11 Acres with an average depth of 5' and maximum depth of 20'

Size of Mill River Recreation-Puffer's Pond Greenway: 120 Acres

Responsible Entity: solely the Conservation Commission (M.G.L. Ch.40 § 8c)

Estimated Annual Visitation: 10,000

Maximum Daily Visitor Count: 550+

Online: Puffer's Pond is a popular destination on <http://www.swimmingholes.org>

Water Quality: Consistently below state levels for e.coli

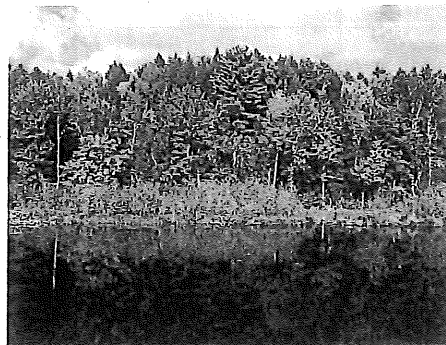
Date of Last Dredging: 1986 and removed 100,000 cubic yards

Fundraising: Friends of Puffer's Pond raises approximately \$4,000 annually

The Dam: built ca. 1895, a masonry structure that 'weeps' and has a maximum height of almost 33 feet.

Mill Activity: at the industrial peak, up to two mills lined the Mill River and Cushman Brook in North Amherst.

Ice-Making: The Puffer family harvested and delivered ice from the pond for nearly thirty years, until the early 1940's. The ice house was located on what is now South Beach.



PUFFER'S POND PUBLIC FORUMS—

What will the Pond and surrounding area look like in 2020?

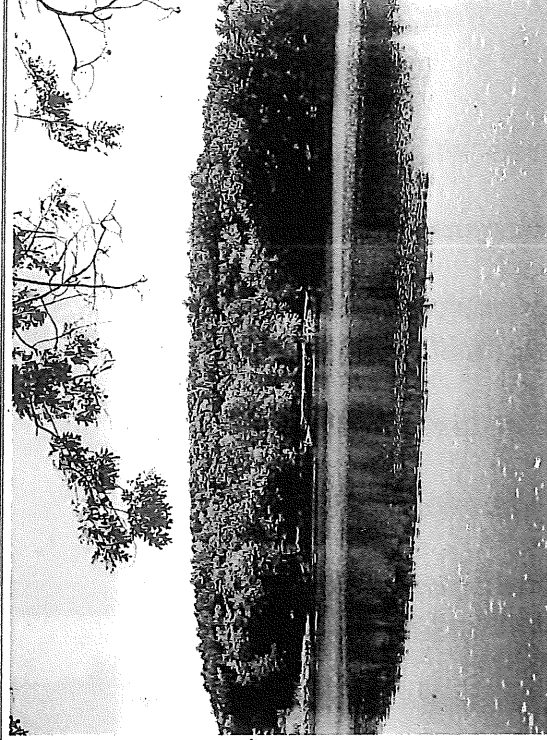
When: Saturday, October 24th at 1:00 p.m.

Where: Meeting Room, North Congregational Church

When: Thursday, October 29th at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Glass Room, Bangs Community Center

Puffer's Pond and its surrounding conservation area is a beloved resource in Town. The Puffer's Pond 2020 (PP 2020) committee is working on plans to preserve its future and is looking for your input: PP 2020 is sponsoring two public forums on the use and future of the pond and surrounding conservation areas – we hope you can come on either Saturday, October 24th at 1:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the North Congregational Church or Thursday evening October 29th at 7:00 p.m. in the Glass Room at the Bangs Community Center, to share with us your experiences and ideas and then to stay and learn a little of its history from the Conservation Director's point of view. We will be collecting into our database your observations on current uses of the Pond and surrounding conservation areas to help get a clear picture of how the resource satisfies the needs of the Town, on challenges and inappropriate uses, and on bright ideas for its future. Your input and opinions will be added to the questionnaire results to inform our work. (Check out www.amherstma.gov if you would like to fill out a questionnaire.)



The Puffer's Pond 2020 committee was formed by the Conservation Commission this summer to help tackle the difficult issues that arise from increasingly heavy use of the Pond and nearby conservation areas. The committee is made up of Amherst residents as well as representatives from the Select Board, Planning Board, LSSE Commission and the Conservation Commission. The committee will be publishing a report next spring with recommendations and strategies that will guide the Town in sustaining this valuable resource.

We look forward to your joining us at one of these forums and helping create a healthy vision of Puffer's Pond in the next decade and beyond.

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**FY2012 PARC Grant:
Sustaining
Puffer's Pond**

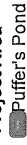
Town of Amherst



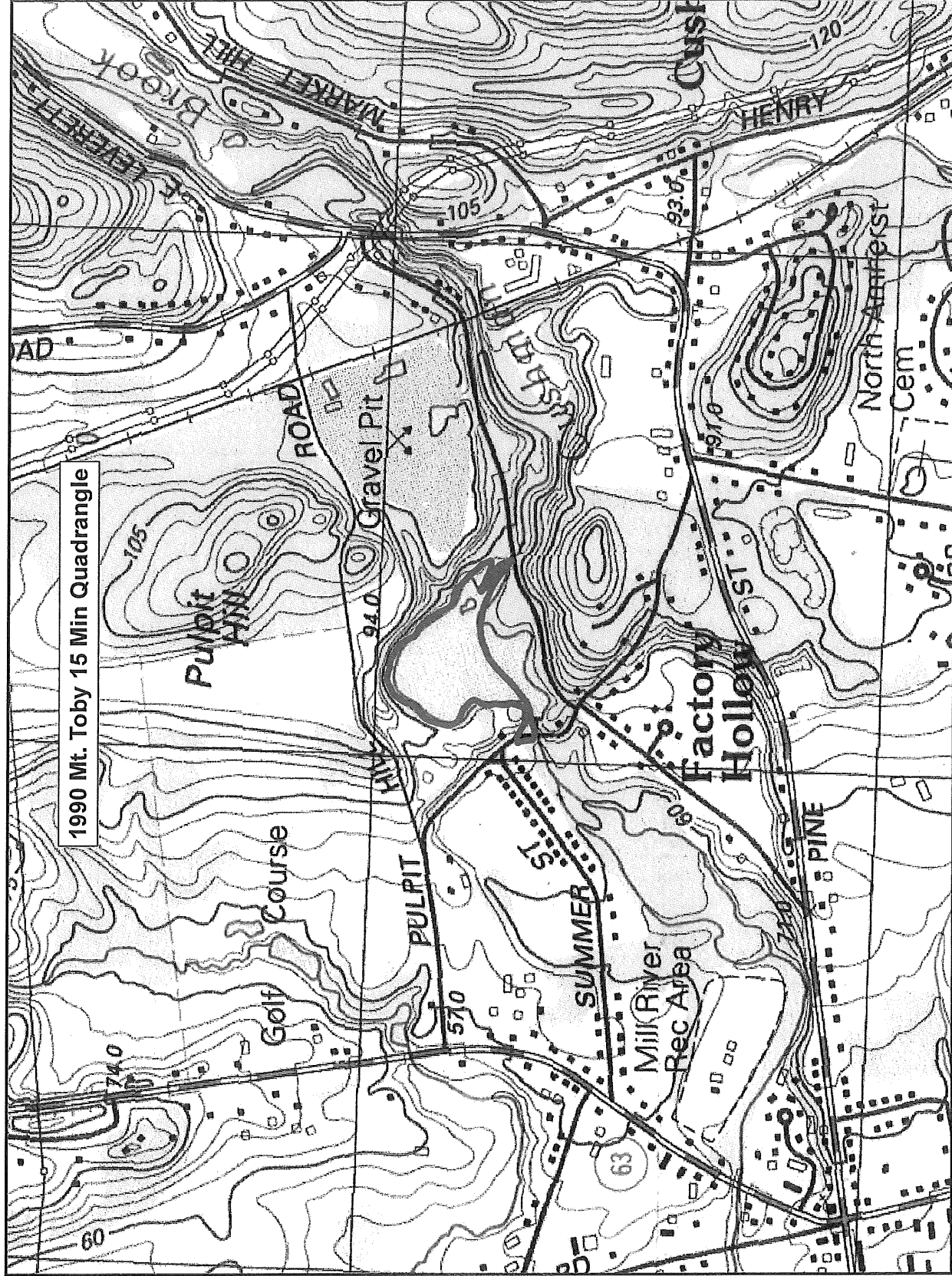
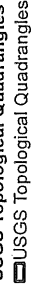
www.amherstma.gov

USGS Topological Map

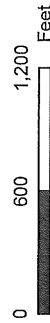
Project Area



USGS Topological Quadrangles

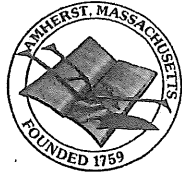


Horizontal Datum: NAD 83
Zone 18N
Vertical Datum: Mean Sea Level
Elevation: Feet
Horizontal Scale: 1 inch = 600 feet
Vertical Scale: 1 inch = 60 feet
This map was prepared from 1:25,000 scale topographic maps and 1:25,000 scale aerial photography. It is not intended for navigation. The Town of Amherst is not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map.



1 inch = 600 feet

FY2012 PARC Grant Sustaining Puffer's Pond



North Amherst
Village Center

Cushman
Village Center

Environmental Justice Populations

Massachusetts Environmental Justice Criteria
Environmental Justice (EJ) populations are determined by identifying all Census 2000 block groups that meet any of the following criteria:
Income—Households earn 65% or less of statewide median household income
Minority Population—25% or more of residents belong to a minority group
Foreign-born—25% or more residents are foreign-born
English Proficiency—25% or more of residents lack English language proficiency

Project Area

- Puffer's Pond

20-Minute Walk

- 1 Mile Distance

Populations Meeting Three EJ Criteria

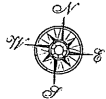
- Income, Minority Population, and Foreign-born

Populations Meeting Two EJ Criteria

- Income and Minority Population

Populations Meeting One EJ Criterion

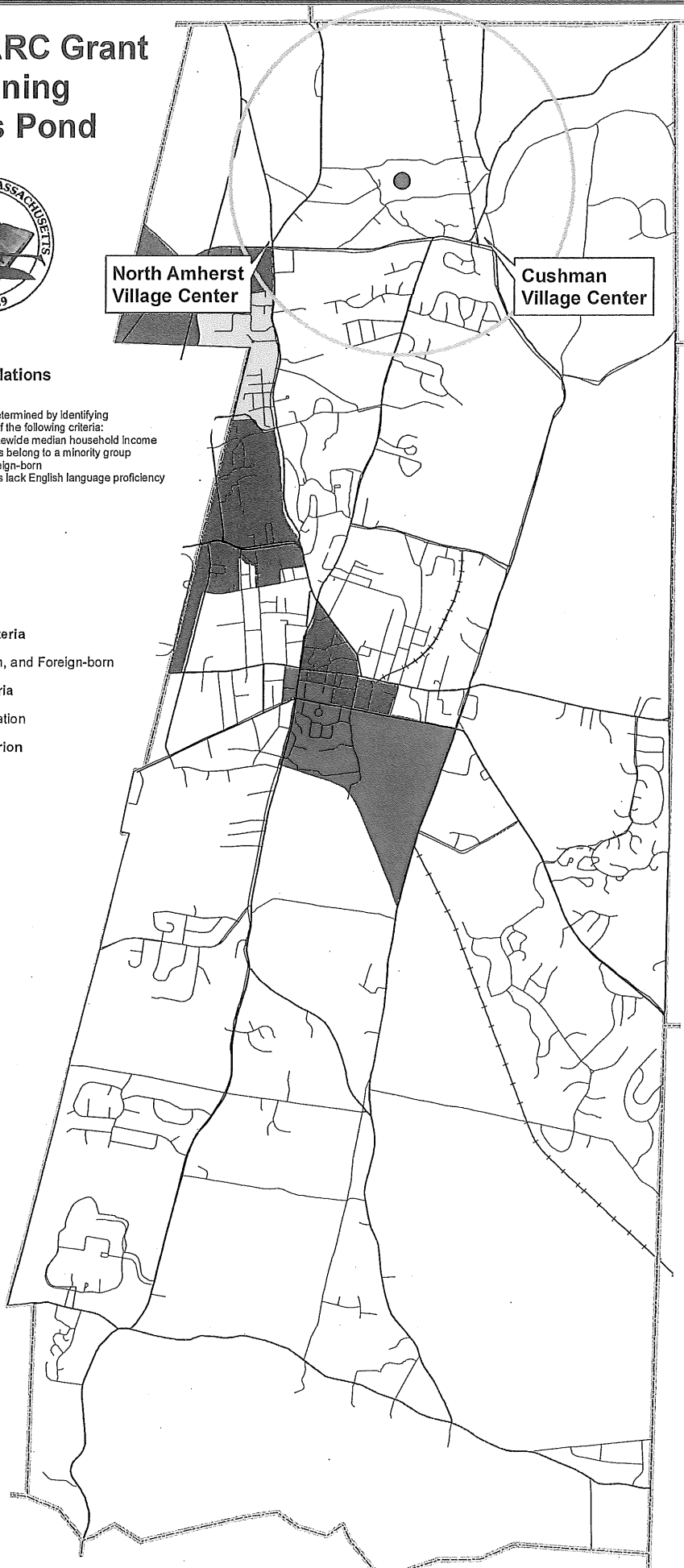
- Minority Population
- Income



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 6,000 Feet

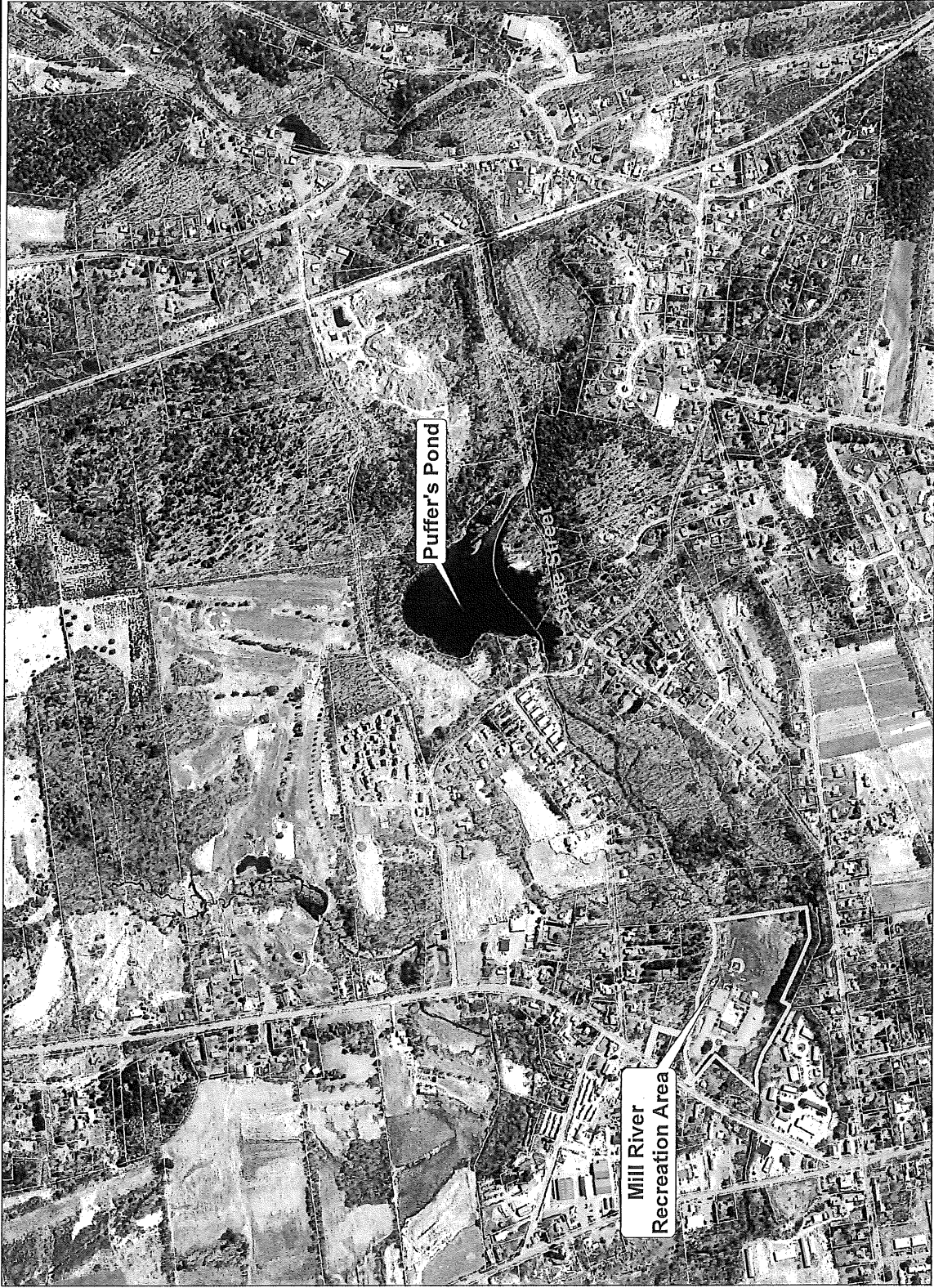
1 inch = 3,000 feet



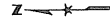
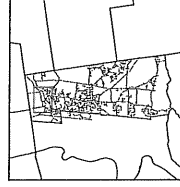
Mill River Recreation Area- Puffer's Pond Greenway



www.amherstma.gov










National datum: NAD 83, Massachusetts Coordinate System,
Zone 18N, Datum: NAD 83, For:
Vertical Reference Datum: NAVD 83
Planimetric base map features compiled at 1"=40'
and 1"=100' scale from April, 1999 Aerial Photography,
Aerial Photography: April, 2004
Parcels compiled through a "best-fit" methodology to
match the base map, revisions are ongoing.
The Town of Amherst and its mapping contractor assume
no legal responsibility for the information contained herein.

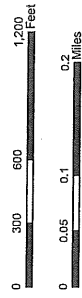


0 162.5 325 650
Feet
1 inch = 300 feet



Basemap

-  Structures
-  Pavement
-  Unpaved Roads
-  Streams
-  Marsh or Swamp
-  Rivers, Ponds, Reservoirs
-  Tree Cover



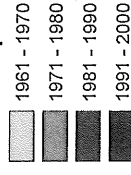


Town-Owned Properties
Land Managing Department

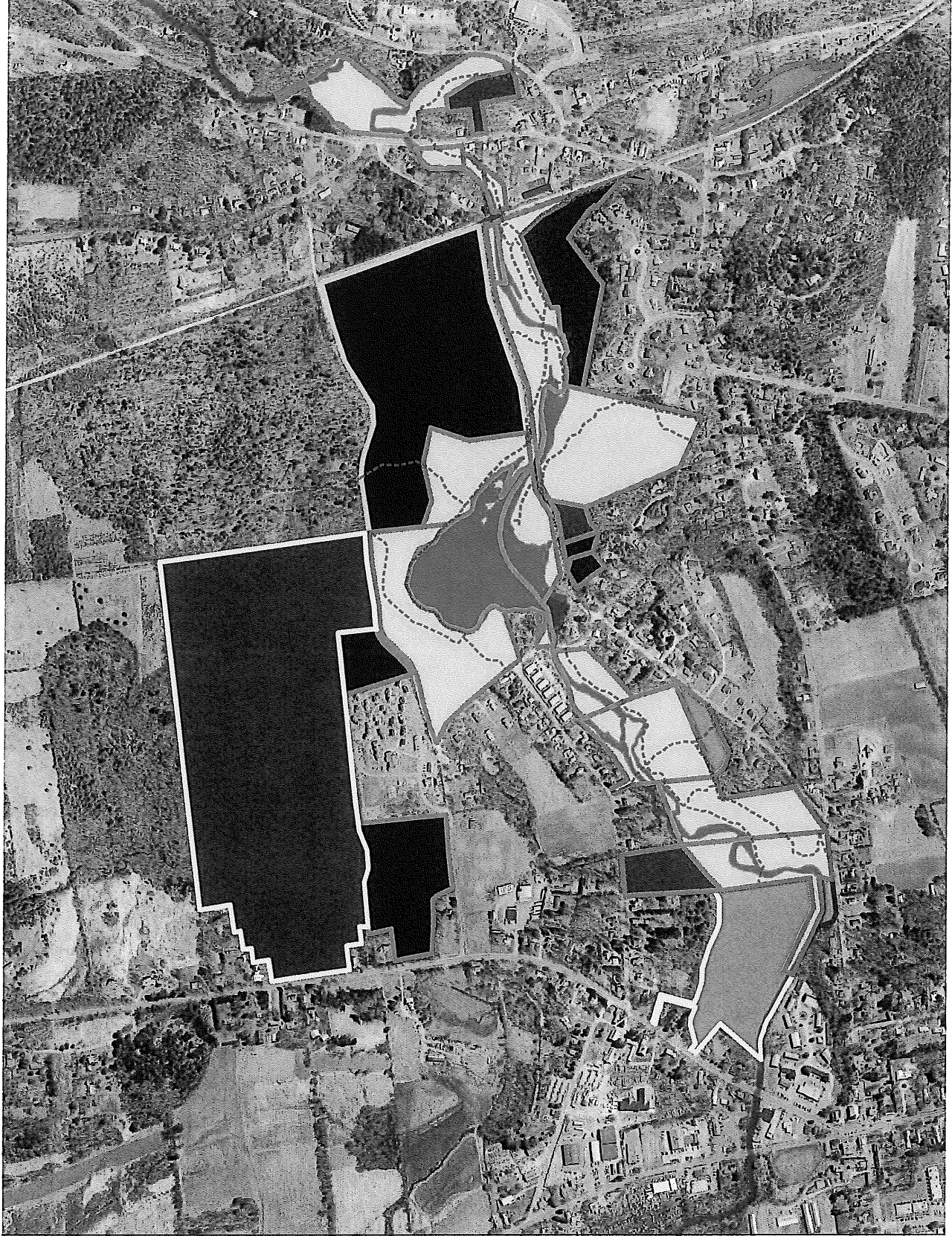


Conservation and DPW

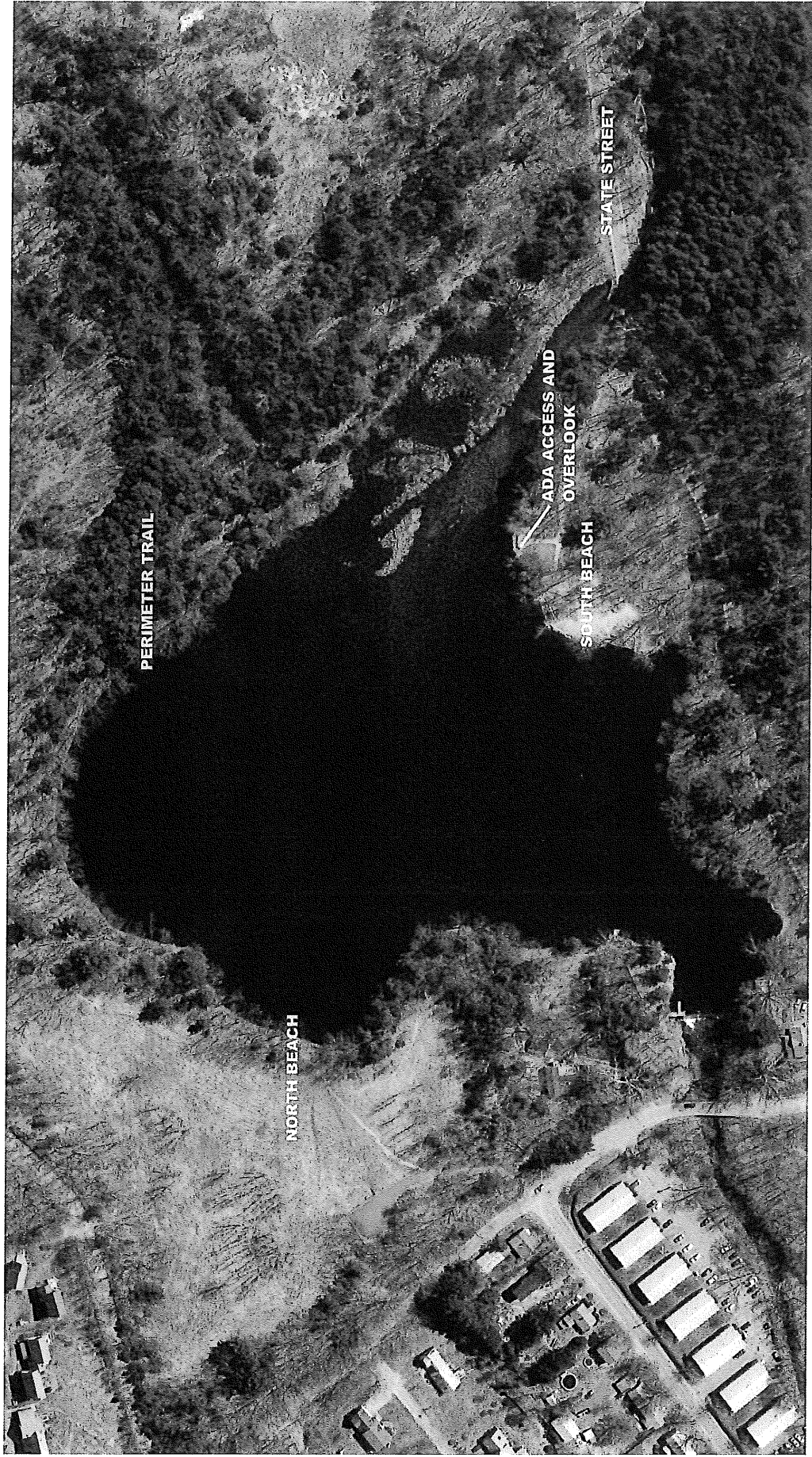
Date of Acquisition



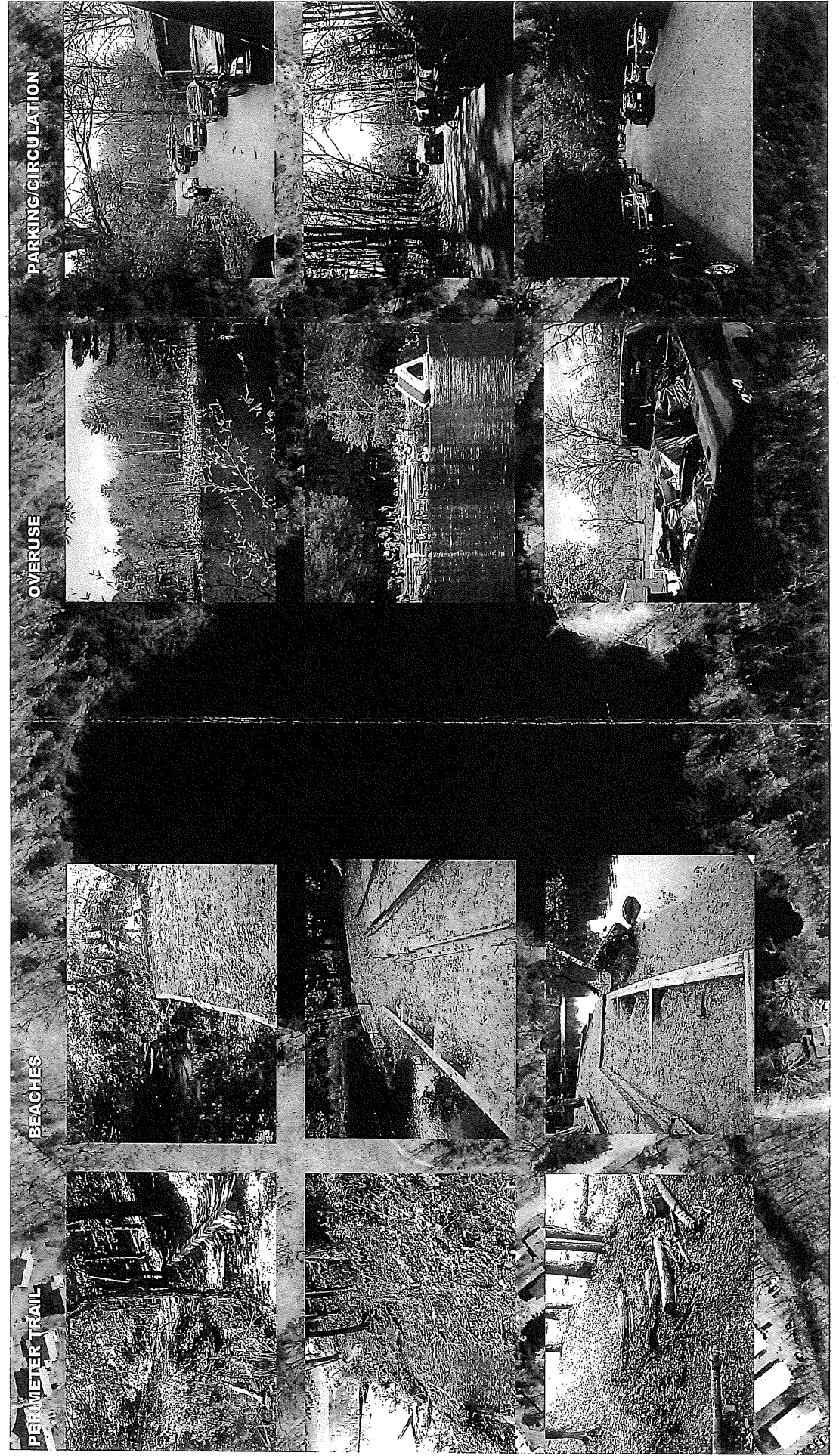
Trails



**FY2012 PARC GRANT PROGRAM:
SUSTAINING PUFFER'S POND**



FY2012 PARC GRANT PROGRAM: SUSTAINING PUFFER'S POND



PERIMETER TRAIL

BEACHES

OVERUSE

PARKING/CIRCULATION

